

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of :)	
)	
Digital Audio Broadcasting Systems)	MM Docket No. 99-325
And Their Impact on the Terrestrial)	
Radio Broadcast Service)	

To: The Commission

**COMMENTS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida (“MDCPS”), is the licensee of non-commercial educational (“NCE”) Station WLRN-FM, Miami, Florida. MDCPS operates 350 public schools with an enrollment of 360,000 pupils. It serves one of the most diverse populations in the United States, a population which can benefit significantly from the proposals for digital audio broadcasting (“DAB”) advanced by the Commission in Further Notice of Proposed Rule-making and Notice of Inquiry, MM Docket No. 99-325, FCC 04-99, released April 20, 2004.

MDCPS urges the Commission to adopt the most flexible regulatory

position possible with respect to digital audio multicasting. In markets like Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Florida there are few, if any, remaining opportunities to inaugurate new NCE FM services. Digital audio multicasting has the potential to double the amount of NCE radio programming available to the public, without building a single new radio station.

In Miami-Dade County, Florida there is sufficient demand for NCE programming to easily fill a second English language audio channel on Station WLRN-FM. There is also significant demand for foreign language and ethnic programming. Digital audio multicasting would be a valuable means of expanding WLRN-FM's capacity to serve the Miami-Dade community.

In this connection, MDCPS does not believe it is useful to require a minimum amount of high definition audio programming on DAB stations. While high definition audio could enhance the experience of listening to music, it might be relatively unimportant to news, public affairs, and other types of non-music programming. If mandatory high definition audio comes at the cost of reducing the number of channels available for multicasting, then it may not be worth the expense. It is better for each station to decide the appropriate mix of high definition/standard definition audio for its programming format(s).

The Commission asks for comments on the propriety of allowing stations to lease their second audio channels and of allowing datacasting and subscription services on DAB. While MDCPS is a non-commercial educational licensee unlikely to benefit directly from these proposals, Station WLRN-FM will benefit from the successful establishment of a DAB service. MDCPS believes that the best means of achieving a successful DAB service is to give licensees maximum flexibility to develop profitable business models. They should be free to offer a variety of services and the public can choose the services it will support.

With respect to emergency alerts, MDCPS believes that every programming service that is the functional equivalent of today's analog FM service should supply its listeners emergency information. Other rules applicable to today's analog FM service can also be easily accommodated by these analog-equivalent programming services.

MDCPS agrees that NCE FM licensees should use their entire digital capacity primarily for non-profit, non-commercial educational broadcast services. Regulation of digital NCE FM's on the basis of the digital NCE TV model would pose no significant problems. However, MDCPS sees no need to impose fees upon any supplementary services presented on excess digital

capacity.

MDCPS views DAB as a wonderful opportunity to enhance the non-commercial educational programming offerings of Station WLRN-FM. The digital audio multicasting that will be available to stations and their listeners should be a significant incentive for consumers to adopt DAB technology. The Commission should adopt its proposal to implement DAB multicasting with minimum restrictions on a licensee's flexibility to configure its DAB offerings to meet demand for digital radio services.

Respectfully submitted,

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